

Gothic Art

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is Gothic art called "Gothic"?
2. How does Gothic reveal itself in different art forms, architecture, painting, and sculpture?
3. What are the differences between the major cathedrals?
4. How does German and Italian Gothic differ from French Gothic?
5. What was the effect of the Black Death on art?
6. What was the effect of the Crusades on art?
7. What are the major social shifts that occur during the Gothic period?
8. How was the rayonnant style different from the flamboyant?

VOCABULARY

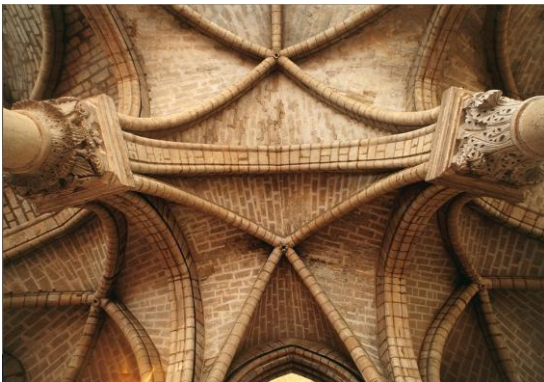
Black Death, Great Schism, Abbot Suger, pointed arch, rose window, flying buttress, trefoil, quatrefoil, choir, compound piers, rayonnant, flamboyant, Thomas Aquinas, Renaissance, constitutional oligarchy, guilds, vernacular literature, The Divine Comedy, humanism, Mendicant Order, patron, naturalism, altarpiece, ogee arch, grisaille, Pieta, chiaroscuro, triptych, diptych



ambulatory and radiating chapels of Saint-Denis
Saint-Denis, France
Abbot Suger
1140 - 44 CE

- What are the architectural innovations present in the design of Saint-Denis?
- What are the effects of the stained glass windows used in the design of Saint-Denis?

vaults of the ambulatory and radiating chapels of Saint-Denis



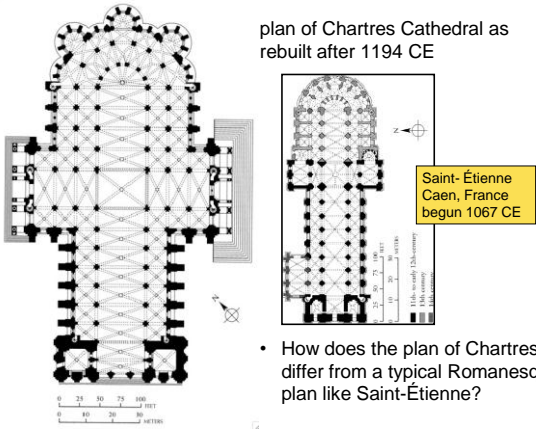


Chartres Cathedral
Chartres, France
Begun 1134 CE, and rebuilt
after a fire in 1194 CE



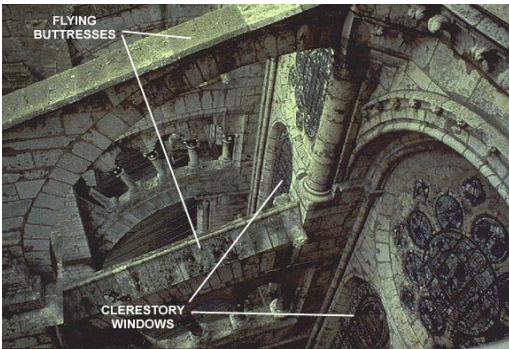
Aerial view of Saint-Sernin
Toulouse, France;
ca. 1070 - 1120 CE

- What are some of the immediate visual cues that tell you this cathedral is different from its Romanesque predecessors?

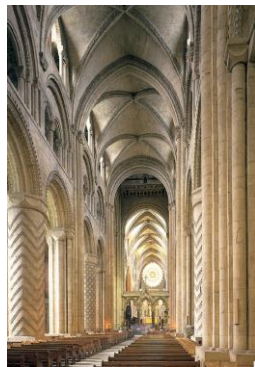


- How does the plan of Chartres differ from a typical Romanesque plan like Saint-Étienne?

exterior view: "flying" buttresses, clerestory windows - Chartres Cathedral



- What was the purpose of the "flying" buttress? Why were they effective in the building of cathedrals?

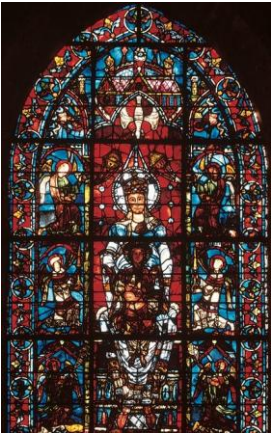


Compare these two buildings. Use these terms: bay, clerestory, nave, columns / piers, arch, ribbed vault



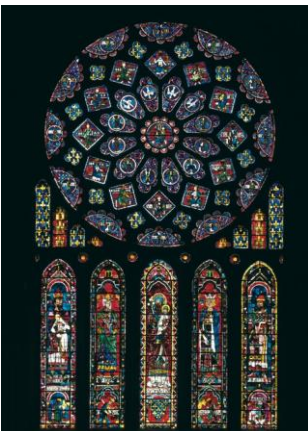
interior of Chartres Cathedral

- In what ways is Chartres' a typical Gothic nave and apse?
- How is the interior of Chartres Cathedral architecturally unified?
- What are the natural light sources in Chartres Cathedral?



Virgin and Child and angels
 (Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere, window in the choir of Chartres Cathedral)
 ca. 1170 CE (with 13th c. side panels)
 16' x 7'

- Describe and characterize the colors present in this window.
- Describe and characterize the image of Mary present in this window.



rose window and lancets,
 north transept,
 Chartres Cathedral
 ca. 1220 CE
 rose window approx. 43' in diameter

- What is the central motif of the rose window?

Royal Portal; west façade, Chartres Cathedral Artist; ca. 1145 - 1155 CE



- What is the sculptural program of the main portal at Chartres?
- How does the Virgin Mary feature in the sculptural program?



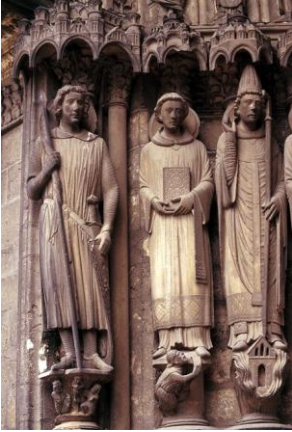
Old Testament kings and queens, jamb statues central doorway of the Royal Portal Chartre Cathedral ca. 1145 - 1155 CE

- Describe the form of the statue columns.



Saint Theodore (left), jamb statue Porch of the Martyrs (left doorway), south transept, Chartres Cathedral ca. 1220 CE

- What indications of *contrapposto* are present in St. Theodore's stance?
- In what ways is St. Theodore like and unlike the other Gothic statues present in the photo?



Compare the sculpture on the left with a work from the Greco-Roman period.



west façade of Laon Cathedral
Laon, France
begun ca. 1190 CE

- Describe the façade of Laon Cathedral and discuss the placement and setting of its windows and portals.
- Identify Gothic architectural innovations visible in the façade of Laon Cathedral.



Interior view of Laon Cathedral

- Describe any Romanesque elements present in the architecture of Laon Cathedral.
- What kind of vaulting is used in Laon Cathedral?

Notre-Dame; Ile-de-la-Cité, Paris, France
Begun 1163 CE; nave and flying buttresses ca. 1180 - 1200 CE; remodeled after 1225 CE





Notre-Dame (view of facade)
Begun 1163 CE; nave and flying buttresses ca. 1180 - 1200 CE; remodeled after 1225 CE

- Describe the geometry of the façade of Notre-Dame.

general view of choir with flying buttresses
Notre Dame, Ile de Paris, Paris, France





ARCHITECTURE: Compare these two buildings using art history vocab.



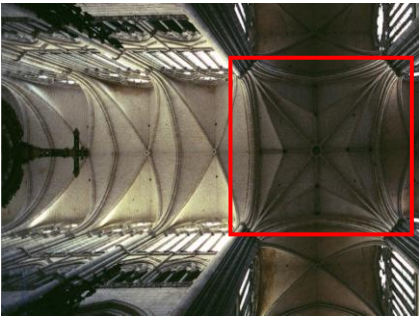
Amiens Cathedral
Amiens, FR
Robert de Luzarches,
Thomas de Cormont, and
Renaud de Cormont
begun 1220 CE

- Are the facades of Amiens an advance of Gothic architecture or just a copy of those that preceded it?



interior of Amiens Cathedral

choir and crossing vaulting of Amiens Cathedral with views of the triforium and clerestory windows

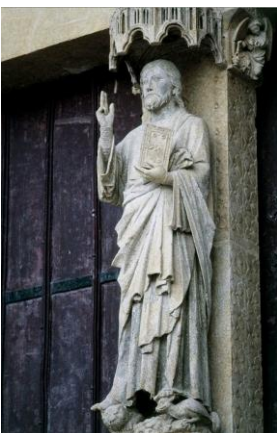


- Describe the vaulting at the crossing. How is that vault supported?



choir vaulting (*top*) and apse clerestory (*bottom*) of Amiens Cathedral

- Describe the effects of height and light in Amiens Cathedral?



Christ (Beau Dieu), trumeau statue of central doorway, west façade, Amiens Cathedral ca. 1220 - 1235 CE

- Compare "Beau Dieu" with earlier Gothic sculpture. In what ways is this portrayal of Christ consistent with previous portrayals of Christ. In what ways is it different?

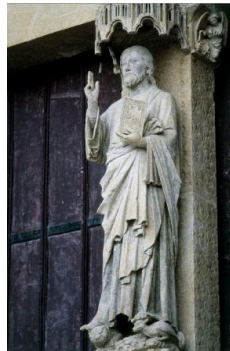


Reims Cathedral west façade
Reims, France
ca. 1225 - 1290 CE



Visitation (Mary and Elizabeth,
her much older sister)
central doorway, west façade
ca. 1230 CE

- These sculptures are part of the "Classicizing" school of Gothic sculpture.
- What is unique about these sculptures compared with other Gothic sculpture from earlier cathedrals?
- In what ways does Roman art inform the portrayal of Elizabeth?

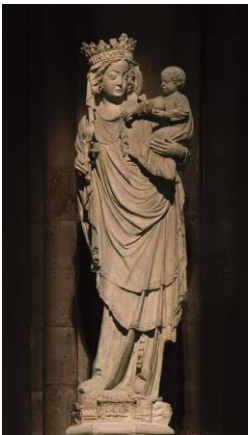


Compare these two works. Use these terms among others:
form, contrapposto, classical, gesture, stylized.



interior of the upper chapel,
Sainte-Chapelle
Ile-de-la-Cité, Paris, France
1243 - 1248 CE

- Why might this chapel be considered the natural conclusion of Gothic architecture?



Virgin and Child ("Virgin of Paris")
Notre Dame, Paris
early 14th c. CE

- Notice the Gothic "S" curve in the Virgin's posture. The posture attempts to imitate a kind of *contrapposto* without an actual anatomical shift in weight.
- What explains the Gothic love affair with the Virgin Mary?
- How is Christ portrayed in this sculpture? Compare this portrayal with other medieval and Romanesque portrayals.







Virgin of Jeanne d'Evreux, from the Abbey Church, Saint-Denis
1339 CE
silver gilt and enamel
2' 3 1/2" high



Hall of the Cloth Guild
Bruges, Belgium
begun 1230 CE

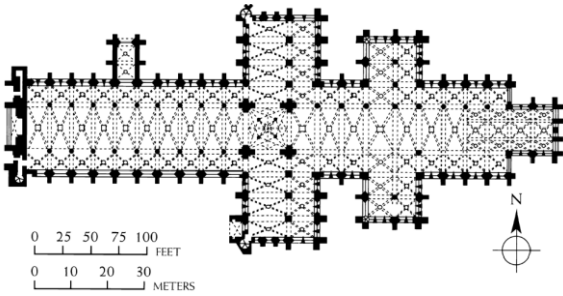
- Identify the Gothic architectural elements of the Hall of the Cloth Guild.



west façade of Salisbury Cathedral
Salisbury, England
1220 - 1258 CE; west façade completed 1265 CE; spire completed ca. 1320 1330 CE

- Describe ways that the façade of Salisbury Cathedral differs from the French Gothic façades?

plan of Salisbury Cathedral



- How is the plan of Salisbury Cathedral distinctive?
- Describe the position and scale of the transepts.



interior of Salisbury Cathedral

- In what ways does Salisbury Cathedral depart from the French styles of Gothic architecture?
- Tell how the rib vaults create a strong horizontal emphasis.



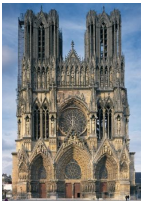
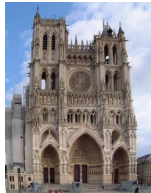
Chapel of Henry VII (also called "The Lady Chapel"), at Westminster Abbey, London, England
 Robert and William Vertue
 1503 - 1519 CE

- What is "fan vaulting"?
- Describe the decorative effect of fan vaulting.



Cologne Cathedral
(aerial view)
Cologne, Germany
Gerhard of Cologne
began 1248 CE

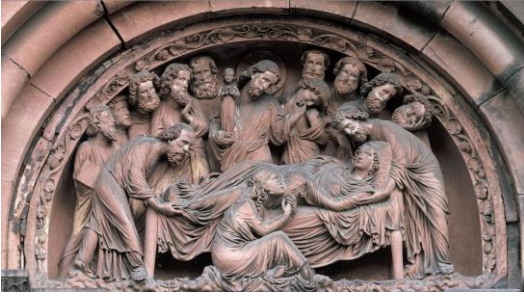
- The nave, towers, and façade of the cathedral were completed in 1880 CE.
- What took them so long?





choir of Cologne Cathedral
completed 1322 CE

Death of the Virgin; south transept of Strasbourg Cathedral
 Strasbourg, France
 ca. 1230 CE



- Describe the relationship between form and content in this high-relief sculpture.
- Describe the emotional quality of this work.



Ekkehard and Uta, statues in the west choir of the Naumburg Cathedral,
 Naumburg, Germany
 ca. 1249 - 1255 CE
 painted limestone
 approx. 6' 2" high

- In what ways and to what degree are these figures individualized? How does the sculptor achieve such effect?
- What is the relationship between the standing figures and their architectural setting?



Virgin with the Dead Christ
 (Rottgen Pietà)
 Rhineland, GR
 ca. 1300 - 1325 CE
 painted wood
 2' 10 1/2" high
 Rheinisches Landmuseum,
 Bonn, Germany

- How does the portrayal of Christ suggest suffering?
- How does the portrayal of Mary suggest grief?



Sacrifice of Isaac detail of the Klosterneburg Altar from the abbey church at Klosterneburg, Austria
 Nicholas of Verdun
 1181 CE
 gilded copper and enamel
 5 1/2" high
 Stiftsmuseum, Klosterneburg



Shrine of the Three Kings from the Cologne Cathedral
 Cologne, Germany
 Nicholas of Verdun
 begun ca. 1190 CE
 silver, bronze, enamel, and gemstones
 5' 8" x 6' x 3' 8"

- What was the original function of this shrine?
- How does the design of the shrine imitate a familiar Roman architectural structure?



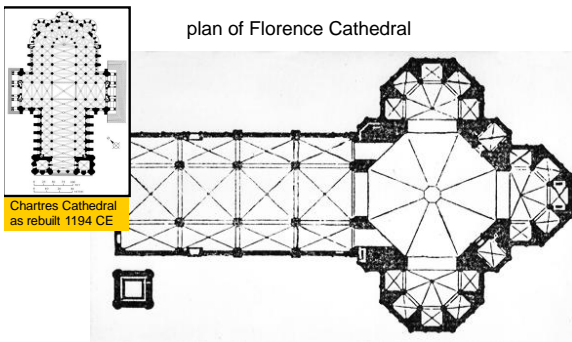
west façade of Orvieto Cathedral
 Orvieto, Italy
 Lorenzo Maitini and Arnolfo di Cambio
 begun 1310 CE

- Identify the details borrowed from the French Gothic style and the details that seem uniquely Italian.
- Describe the form and placement of the pinnacles.



Santa Maria del Fiore, also known as the Florence Cathedral or "il Duomo"
Florence, Italy
Arnolfo di Cambio
begun in 1296 CE

- The dome of the cathedral was not completed until 1436.
- Technically a Gothic cathedral, in what ways does this Italian design, from this view, depart from French and German Gothic tradition?



- How does the plan of the Florence Cathedral depart from traditional Gothic cathedrals?



façade of Florence Cathedral with *campinale* in background

- This view of the façade shows best the cathedral's Gothic qualities. What are they and how do they seem to be used differently in this cathedral?

main portal of Florence Cathedral



Royal Portal; west façade,
Chartres Cathedral
Artist; ca. 1145 - 1155 CE



interior of Florence Cathedral

- Compare the use of light in the Florence Cathedral with the French Gothic cathedrals' use of light.

Doge's Palace
Venice, Italy
begun ca. 1340 - 1345 CE



- Describe the architectural levels of the Doge's Palace.

Key Concepts

- Like Romanesque art, Gothic has quite different regional variations. The **French Gothic** (which is what most people think of when they hear the word "Gothic") is characterized by **light and height**; style evolves over time becoming even more and more elaborate as it becomes *rayonnant* and then *flamboyant*. German Gothic is similar to French Gothic. The Italian Gothic is quite different from its northern kin. Italian Gothic is more grounded and features Gothic facades, as opposed to the all-over style of the French. **Italians ignore the flying buttress.**
- In sculpture and pictorial representations, in the Gothic period there is an evolution away from medieval styles and towards something pre-Renaissance. Figures emerge as more human and anatomically correct, while pictorial representations use more modeling and shading to show three-dimensionality.
- Guilds and mercantile organizations begin to organize and prosper, as individuals assert more power over their own destiny and sovereignty. The feudal system, founded on the fealty of the individual to his most immediate superior begins to disintegrate.
